

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STOCKHOLM 1464

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, IN, SW
SUBJECT: PROPOSED VIGGEN SALE TO INDIA

REF: STATE 94088

1. DURING CALL BY DCM APRIL 13 TO DISCUSS FOREIGN MINISTER SODER'S TRIP TO CHINA AND VIETNAM, MFA SECRETARY GENERAL LEIFLAND BROUGHT UP VIGGEN SALES TO INDIA. SPEAKING WITH FORCE AND FEELING, HE REITERATED THE SWEDISH ARGUMENTS FOR USG APPROVAL. LATER APRIL 13 THE AMBASSADOR CALLED ON LEIFLAND TO DISCUSS THE US NUCLEAR AGREEMENT RENEGOTIATION PROPOSAL, AND LEIFLAND MADE AMNY OF THE SAME ARGUMENTS RE THE VIGGEN. WHILE THE ARGUMENTS ARE NOT NEW, SINCE LEIFLAND--WHOM WE KNOW TO BE SYMPATHETIC TO THE US--PUT THEM AGAIN SO FORCEFULLY THE EMBASSY FEELS THEY SHOULD BE REPORTED.

2. LEIFLAND EMPHASIZED HOW CRUCIAL THIS SALE WAS TO THE SWEDISH AIRCRAFT INDUSTRY--"A CASE OF LIVE OR DIE," HE SAID. HE SAID HE KNEW THE USG POSITION WAS THAT A STRONG SWEDISH DEFENSE WAS IMPORTANT FOR THE WEST, AND THAT THE SWEDISH AIRCRAFT INDUSTRY WAS AN IMPORTANT PART OF THIS PICTURE. IF THE USG SAID NO NOW, IT WOULD BE A POSSIBLY FATAL BLOW TO THE SWEDISH
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PAGE 02 STOCKH 01464 131601Z

AIRCRAFT INDUSTRY, AND HE COULD NOT UNDERSTAND HOW THE US COULD GO AGAINST ITS OWN POLICY IN THIS WAY. HE SAID SWEDEN WAS IN THE FOREFRONT OF THOSE WHO AGREED WITH THE USG'S EFFORT TO RESTRAIN REGIONAL ARMS RACES, BUT IN THIS CASE IT WAS PERFECTLY CLEAR THAT INDIA WAS GOING TO ACQUIRE A DPSA AND NO ONE COULD STOP HER. HE SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THE INDIANS WERE PRESSING FOR WORD

ON THE US DECISION, AND APRIL 24TH WAS SOME KIND OF DEADLINE, SO THAT THE MATTER WAS URGENT.

3. DCM EXPRESSED SYMPATHY FOR SWEDISH POSITION AND WENT OVER FAMILIAR US ARGUMENTS, MENTIONING THE KFIR-TO-ECUADOR PRECEDENT AND STRESSING THE TURNDOWN OF PAKISTAN ON THE A7. DCM SAID USG WAS CAUGHT BETWEEN TWO IMPORTANT POLICIES, SUPPORT FOR SWEDISH DEFENSE AND COMMITMENT TO RESTRAIN REGIONAL ARMS RACES; BUT HE BELIEVED THAT PAKISTAN/A7 AFFAIR WAS SO RECENT AND SO IMPORTANT TO US INTERESTS THAT THIS SIDE MIGHT WELL PREVAIL AND USG ANSWER TO GOS WOULD BE NEGATIVE. DCM SAID ASIDE FROM THE MERITS, THERE WAS THE ADDITIONAL ELEMENT THAT MANY SOURCES HINTED THAT THE VIGGEN DID NOT HAVE THAT GOOD A CHANCE OF WINNING THE SALES COMPETITION. LEIFLAND SAID COMPETITION WAS TOUGH, AND BARGAINING INTENSE, BUT VIGGEN STILL HAD "FIGHTING CHANCE" AT LEAST AND HE VERY MUCH HOPED USG DECISION WOULD BE POSITIVE.
KENNEDY-MINOTT

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